

U.S. steps up drive to conquer Libya

Oil profiteers call the shots

By Fred Goldstein

President Barack Obama's speech of March 28 was largely devoted to justifying U.S. military intervention in Libya on humanitarian grounds, as being necessary to prevent a "massacre." It was meant to obscure the fundamental fact that Washington is leading an effort, joined by the British and French imperialists, to destroy a sovereign government and recolonize Libya.

This war is about oil, money and a drive to unleash the Pentagon's arsenal on Libya in order to bring it back under the total domination of imperialism. The rest is all lies and staged propaganda.

The speech concealed the real role that the U.S. military is playing and will continue to play in this naval and air campaign, which is costing \$100 million a day to U.S. taxpayers alone. The weekend before Obama spoke about pulling back and leaving the job to NATO, six tank-killing A-10 Warthogs that fire laser-guided missiles and 30-millimeter cannons arrived on the scene. The U.S. also deployed two B-1B bombers as well as AC-130 gunships, which orbit over targets at 15,000 feet and use 40-millimeter and 105-millimeter cannons. These gunships are precise and are meant for cities. (New York Times, March 29)

The military role of the U.S. is utterly predominant. Of 200 devastatingly accurate Tomahawk cruise missiles fired so far, 193 have been fired by U.S. forces. The Pentagon has dropped 455 precision-guided munitions, compared to 147 by the other imperialist powers.

Most importantly, the U.S. orchestrates the entire air war. Its eavesdropping aircraft locate positions. These locations are passed on to Global Hawk drones, then relayed to AWACS planes that send target information to F-16 and Harrier jets. This is a Pentagon-run war.

A war for spoils

Obama's speech also concealed the struggle over spoils that is at the bottom of this war. The "rebels" rose up in the oil-rich east of the country. They already have their own oil company, set up in Benghazi early in the struggle. Claiming to represent 40 percent of the country's 1.6 million barrels of oil a day output, it operates a refinery and terminal out

Continued on page 10

- LIBYA**
- Youth protest bombing 8
 - Imperialist jets attack cities 9
 - South African unions' statement 9
 - It's about oil 11

**\$\$\$ for JOBS & EDUCATION
NOT WAR APRIL 9/10**

NATIONAL MARCHES & RALLIES 12 NOON Union Sq. 14 St. NYC Dolores Park San Francisco

**NO to Racism,
Attacks on Muslims,
Immigrants & Unions**

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

518.227.6947 • 646.998.6103

www.UNACpeace.org
UNACpeace@gmail.com

STOP the execution of Troy Davis!

On March 28 the U.S. Supreme Court denied the last appeals of Georgia death-row prisoner Troy Davis. See the next issue of Workers World for more on this continuing struggle or visit www.workers.org.

U.S. PROTESTS

- Women's action in Harlem 3
- Boston march resists bigotry 4
- Wisconsin struggle continues 5
- Workers demand: 'Tax the banks' 6
- Stop New York austerity 7
- Students say: 'No cuts' 7
- Thousands for immigrant rights 7

Los Angeles solidarity with Wisconsin workers



"We Stand with Wisconsin Workers" was the message from 15,000 workers and community allies at the March 26 "Our Communities, Our Good Jobs" march through downtown Los Angeles and rally at Pershing Square. Wisconsin Professional Firefighters Association President Mahlon Mitchell was on the lead banner and spoke to the rally. He called on workers

to "stay in the streets" to win. A mini-rally at a Ralphs grocery store on the march route put the full support of regional unions on the side of the Food and Commercial Workers in their current contract negotiations. Bosses forced a 20-week strike in 2003-2004.

—Report and photo by Cheryl LaBash

Subscribe to Workers World

☐ Eight weeks trial \$4 ☐ One year subscription \$25

212.627.2994 www.workers.org

Name _____

Address _____

City /State/Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Workers World Newspaper 55 W. 17th St. #5C, NY, NY 10011

Pro-socialist fighter AL STRASBURGER

By Sue Davis

Called a “far-left peacenik” who was “widely recognized for his presence at anti-war, anti-nuke and pro-labor demonstrations” in Red Bank, N.J., Al Strasburger worked closely with Workers World for four decades until his death on March 10. (Red Bank Green, March 11)

Born to labor activist parents in 1931, Strasburger lived and worked most of his life in the small cultural center about 25 miles due south of New York City, except when he was earning degrees at New York University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A social worker for New Jersey’s Division of Youth and Family Services for 37 years and a shop steward for the Communication Workers union, Strasburger was devoted to organizing his co-workers and promoting union solidarity.

Red Bank Green credits Strasburger with starting the anti-war movement in Monmouth County in 1962, when he organized the first anti-nuke protest there. As opposition to the Vietnam War grew, Strasburger organized weekly groups to leaflet anti-war literature and distribute Workers World newspapers at Ft. Monmouth and Ft. Dix. He also organized buses to many anti-war marches in New York City and Washington, D.C.

Kevin Shomo remembers how his longtime friendship with Strasburger began during a 1969 anti-war protest in New York. The African-American high school student soon began working with Strasburger, handing out literature at military posts, local unemployment offices, supermarkets and various workplaces when workers were on strike. “Many times we were hassled by the police for distributing ‘communist material,’ and once we were issued a summons for distributing without a permit. But of course that was thrown out of court,” Shomo told Workers World.

“Al was truly anti-imperialist and strongly believed socialism was the only way to upend the capitalist hegemony, which was stalling human progress and true equality. He had strong allegiance to the African-American struggle for true self-determination, and he held the Cuban revolution dear to his heart because the triumphant struggle of the Cuban people threw off imperialism

and shed light on the whole region.” Over the years Strasburger made many solidarity trips to Cuba.

“As a person of Jewish descent,” continued Shomo, “he felt it was vitally important that the Jewish community support the Palestinians’ right to their homeland, to the right to return and to an end to Israel’s occupation. In the fall of 2001 after the attack on the Twin Towers, Al was instrumental in organizing a weekly vigil at Ft. Monmouth to counteract the hysteria and attacks on Arabic and Muslim communities here and to oppose the wars against Afghanistan and then Iraq.”

Not only did Strasburger contribute generously to Workers World as one of the first members of the WW Supporter Program in 1977, but he made donations to support the many anti-imperialist struggles sponsored by the International Action Center. Jerry Goldberg also remembers the checks he sent to the Detroit branch of Workers World Party: “Al was always supportive of efforts in Detroit to fight plant closings, foreclosures, etc., making contributions and sending messages of solidarity. Like the rest of the party we will miss this dedicated fighter for socialism.”

John Parker, a leader in the Los Angeles branch and WWP presidential candidate in 2004, remembers Strasburger as his first introduction to WW in the early 1970s. “Al sometimes visited my neighbors in Fair Haven, N.J., who were in the Communist Party, and I got to see the benefits of being nonsectarian and principled. I’m sure the impression they and he made on me when I was a child helped me toward the path of fighting for revolution.”

“Al devoted his whole life to the betterment of humanity,” summed up Shomo. “Al will surely be missed by all who knew and loved him.” Al Strasburger presente! □



1931-2011

New York commemorates 1911 factory fire

The streets surrounding the site of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire were filled for the 100th anniversary commemoration on March 25. Music, readings and poetry recounted the deaths of 146 workers, mainly young Italian and Jewish immigrant women and girls, who perished in the flames or leaped to their death from factory windows. The doors had been locked by the factory owners to prevent bits of fabric from being pilfered.

The building where it happened was fireproof and still stands, now part of New York University in lower Manhattan. Black and purple mourning bunting hung from windows on the eighth floor where the fire broke out.

Most of the large crowd in attendance were union members and families of Triangle workers who joined in singing “Solidarity Forever.” New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has demonized teachers and transit workers and threatened public employees with cutbacks and mass layoffs, was loudly booed as he spoke.



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Commemorative events also took place in many other cities around the U.S., as workers continue to resist an assault on their rights to organize for workplace safety, justice, economic security and to stop union busting and anti-public-sector attacks.

— Ellen Catalinotto

WORKERS WORLD this week...

★ In the U.S.

Los Angeles solidarity with Wisconsin workers	1
Al Strasburger, 1931-2011	2
New York commemorates 1911 factory fire	2
Women rally, march for justice	3
How the banks destroyed Detroit	3
Supporters rally for anti-foreclosure attorney	3
Anti-immigrant bills defeated in Arizona Senate	4
SNCC women recount Civil Rights struggles	4
‘Peace parade’ challenges Boston status quo	4
Pennsylvania education funds cut	4
Wisconsin workers, students continue fight	5
UAW seeks ‘partnership’ with bosses	5
Reaction, cutbacks bring working-class resistance	6
Union protest demands: ‘Tax the banks’	6
Chuck Turner sent to jail	6
Atlanta rally vs. anti-immigrant bill	7
Thousands march against ‘austerity’	7
Boston student walk-out hits education cuts	7
Protest slams New York budget cuts	7
Youth protesters condemn attack on Libya	8
Yemeni-American community rallies against racism	9
Leonard Weinglass, 1933-2011	10

★ Around the world

U.S. steps up drive to conquer Libya	1
Massive protest vs. ‘austerity’ in Britain	8
Senegalese at NYC protest say: ‘Wade must go!’	8
Imperialists escalate bombing operations over Libya	9
COSATU condemns foreign military occupation in Libya	9
Washington tries to control Arab world’s revolts	11
War in Libya: It’s about oil	11

★ Editorials

Japan’s nuclear disaster ‘made in USA’	10
--	----

★ Noticias En Español

Libia y la reconquista	12
------------------------------	----

Workers World
55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org

Vol. 53, No. 13 • April 7, 2011
Closing date: March 29, 2011

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell,
Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead,
Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe,
Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel,
Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash,
Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette,
Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

Technical Staff: Sue Davis, Shelley Ettinger,
Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez,
Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Michael Martínez,
Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

Copyright © 2011 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor,
New York, N.Y. 10011.

JOIN US

Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in struggles on all the issues that face the working class & oppressed peoples — Black & white, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women & men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed & students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.
New York, NY 10011
212-627-2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 5565
Atlanta, GA 30307
404-627-0185
atlanta@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St., Bsm.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443-909-8964
baltimore@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617-522-6626
Fax 617-983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
367 Delaware Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202
716-883-2534
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
773-381-5839
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216-738-0320
cleveland@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313-459-0777
detroit@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
331 W. Main St., Ste. 408
Durham, NC 27701
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713-503-2633
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
5274 W Pico Blvd.
Suite # 207
Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
323-515-5870

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610-931-2615
phila@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
585-436-6458
rochester@workers.org

San Diego, Calif.
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
619-692-0355
sandiego@workers.org

San Francisco
2940 16th St., #207
San Francisco
CA 94103
415-738-4739
sf@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

At the Harriet Tubman statue March 26 are Monica Moorehead and Krystle Cheirs, co-chairs of the street meetings.

Women rally, march for justice

By Monica Moorehead
Harlem, N.Y.

The African-American population in Harlem, like so many other working-class communities, is in the throes of a deepening economic crisis, including massive unemployment, gentrification, police repression, and cuts in education and other social services. This crisis, rooted in capitalist greed for profit, has gripped the entire world — but especially hard-hit are women, who are considered the poorest of the poor.

It was with this political awareness that the International Working Women's Committee organized a march and street meetings on March 26 in Harlem to show that all issues are women's issues, and they all must receive our consideration. Women activists of diverse nationalities and ages along with male supporters gathered at the Harriet Tubman memorial statue to hear talks on many issues, in-

cluding the attacks on immigrant rights, education and mass transit, along with Haiti, the Japan tsunami and domestic violence. Women garment workers who lost their lives in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire on March 25, 1911, in New York City — the majority of them teenage immigrants — were paid homage by the speakers.

Chanting, "The Harlems of the world are under attack; what do we do? Act up, fight back!" and "Money for jobs and education, not for war and occupation!" the protesters then marched to the U.S. Armed Forces Center at 125th Street and Lenox Avenue, where they held a second street meeting to connect the wars at home with the wars abroad. Harlem passersby stopped to listen as activists spoke out against U.S. imperialist intervention in Libya, Honduras and Puerto Rico as well as the economic draft, homelessness and union busting.

Speakers at both street meetings as-



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

sailed the anti-poor, anti-worker budgets spearheaded by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Gov. Andrew Cuomo on behalf of Wall Street.

Following the march, an indoor strategy meeting including breakout groups was held at a Harlem community center to discuss developing a strategy to unite the struggles.

Brenda Stokely, a leader of the IWWC, told the press: "Now more than ever activist women, their communities and organizations must join together to build the most powerful movement this country has seen. We must encourage and inspire more women of all ages to raise their voices and take their rightful place in providing leadership to this movement." □

How the banks destroyed Detroit

By Jerry Goldberg
Detroit

Detroit lost 25 percent of its population in the last decade, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. (Detroit News, March 23) Detroit's population declined from 951,270 in 2000 to 713,777 in 2010. Detroit, an 85 percent African-American city, experienced the greatest population loss of any U.S. city except New Orleans.

Not one of the many newspaper articles discussing this lost population puts the blame where it belongs — on the major banks, which have leveled neighborhoods throughout Detroit with mass foreclosures driven by racist, predatory lending.

The foreclosure epidemic that has leveled communities throughout Detroit is a direct product of the racist lending practices of every major bank. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority published data noting 62 percent of all mortgage loans to African Americans in metro Detroit in 2005-2007 were subprime loans, compared to 28 percent for whites. A huge 87 percent of African-American borrowers in Wayne County, where the city of Detroit is located, were sold subprime loans in 2006. (Detroit News, Sept. 8, 2007)

A January 2009 report prepared by the City's Planning and Development Department noted that of 330,000 new mort-

gages in Detroit from 2004 to 2006, 73 percent were subprime mortgages (mortgages at least 3 percent above the standard interest rate).

The report noted that from 2005 to 2009, the city experienced 67,000 bank foreclosures, more than 20 percent of all household mortgages. In addition, there were 4,000 tax foreclosures in the first six months of 2008. The study noted that two-thirds of foreclosed properties were now vacant.

The foreclosures have continued in the years since this report was published. More than 69,000 homes in the Detroit metro area received delinquency or foreclosure notices in 2009. (foreclosuredeals.com, Feb. 9, 2010) Metro Detroit recorded 43,541 foreclosures in 2010, the third-highest number in the U.S. (Detroit News, Jan. 27) Last fall 13,000 tax-foreclosed properties were placed on the auction block. (Michigan Public Radio, Sept. 17)

The banks knew these subprime loans would fail when they made them, but they didn't care because of the massive profits they made — until the bubble burst, at which time the banks were bailed out by the taxpayers and continue to be bailed out to this day. Most mortgage loans are owned or backed by such federal government entities as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Department of Housing and Urban Devel-

opment. The federal government pays the bank the inflated value of the mortgage and then evicts the homeowner.

Stop debt service to the banks

Detroit had the lowest foreclosure rate of any metropolitan area in the U.S. in 1996. (Black Commentator, Nov. 22, 2007) An article on Landlord Nation, April 13, 2009, reported that Detroit, a city once known for its high percentage of home ownership for African Americans, now has the lowest ownership rate for single family detached homes out of the 20 largest cities in the U.S. The average sale price of homes in Detroit with HUD-backed mortgages plunged from \$46,702 in 2003 to \$8,672 in 2008 and \$6,035 for the first three months of 2009.

As early as March 2007, the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs pointed out to Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm that she could declare a state of economic emergency under Michigan law and place a moratorium on foreclosures based on the 1930s Mortgage Moratorium Act, which was upheld by the Michigan and U.S. Supreme Courts. Granholm explicitly stated, "The banks wouldn't like it."

The coalition similarly approached three Detroit mayors — Kwame Kilpatrick, Kenneth Cockrel Jr. and Dave Bing

— to declare a state of emergency in Detroit and formally request the imposition of a foreclosure moratorium for the city. Each of these politicians rejected this demand that would have preserved Detroit's housing and population base.

Today, with the city's tax base destroyed by the loss of property values caused by the foreclosure epidemic, the same banks that caused this crisis have the audacity to demand huge cutbacks in city services and jobs in order to be paid debt service on loans made to the city, which are continually renegotiated as the tax base declines.

In fact, the banks exercise direct control over large sections of the city budget, with casino tax dollars and state revenue sharing paid to trustees, so the funds go directly to the banks. Up to 80 percent of state school aid is earmarked for debt service to the banks. (Detroit News, April 4, 2010)

Detroit can be rebuilt and repopulated. The city needs a massive jobs program where youth can be trained as carpenters, plumbers and electricians to rebuild the housing stock that has been destroyed by the banks, so that vacant homes can be returned to their rightful owners or turned over to the homeless and unemployed. This jobs program can be paid for by placing a moratorium on debt service to the banks, as well as collecting reparations from the banks for destroying this once-great city. □

Supporters rally for anti-foreclosure attorney

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Supporters came out the evening of March 25 to an emergency rally and fundraiser for beloved people's attorney, Vanessa G. Fluker of Detroit. Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Robert Colombo Jr. recently sanctioned and fined Fluker and a client \$12,200, calling her anti-foreclosure appeal "frivolous" and "vexatious."

Fluker is a nationally known and well-respected attorney with a reputation as a tireless fighter for homeowners and others facing foreclosures and evictions. She is a leader in the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs and utilizes her considerable legal skills to challenge the racist, predatory banks and lending institutions.

The event was emceed by the Rev. Ed Rowe at his Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit. In addition to Rowe, U.S. Congressperson John Conyers Jr. and Martha Scott, a Wayne County Commissioner and former state senator, spoke out in strong support of Fluker. Both politicians have long recognized her advocacy on behalf of poor and working people victimized by banks.

Conyers announced he would be hosting fundraising receptions in New York and Washington, D.C., to help raise the approximately \$18,000 appeal bond required to fight the sanctions. Scott said a resolution to stop sheriff's foreclosure sales in Wayne County will be introduced to the Board of Commissioners on April 7.

Steve Babson of the People Before Banks Coalition spoke, as did Fluker and

her attorney, Jerry Goldberg.

"This isn't just about me and this particular homeowner," said Fluker. "This is about every borrower who finds himself in this situation. It's about a judge deterring advocacy for the people. It's a fight for the people."

Goldberg stated: "Most judges don't like Vanessa. She works 84 hours a week to help poor people. Most judges choose the banks instead of the people. This judge made up his mind from the beginning to go after Vanessa."

Goldberg showed the audience the three-inch-thick motion for reconsideration he filed on Fluker's behalf and told how Judge Colombo had received a home mortgage and two subsequent refinancings from the very bank involved in the case for which Fluker was fined. "He must



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Vanessa Fluker with U.S. Rep. John Conyers at March 25 rally.

recuse himself if there is even an appearance of potential impropriety," said Goldberg.

For information on how to make a donation to Fluker's appeal fund, visit www.moratorium-mi.org. □

Racist agenda falters as boycott continues

Anti-immigrant bills defeated in Arizona Senate

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

Racist, reactionary forces in Arizona suffered a setback in the attempt to push their racist program through the state legislature on March 17 when five bills targeting immigrants and Latinos/as were soundly defeated in a Senate committee.

The defeated bills included SB 1308 and SB 1309, known as “the Birthright Bills,” which challenged the 14th Amendment to the Constitution by denying citizenship to U.S.-born children whose parents cannot prove lawful residence in the country. As with SB 1070, legislators in many other states were poised to introduce similar bills in their states if Arizona succeeded with these two bills.

Another significant bill that was defeated was the Immigration Omnibus Bill (SB 1611), which would have further criminalized immigrants by making it illegal to operate a vehicle, enroll in a public school, receive medical services, attend a college

or university, get food stamps, and on and on. The text of this bill is some 30 pages.

The last two bills defeated were SB 1405 and SB 1407, which would have effectively turned hospital and school workers into immigration agents, forcing them to verify legal status before providing any service. The texts of all these bills are available at www.azleg.gov.

Boycott Arizona campaign effective

The Arizona State Senate is dominated by the extreme right wing. Some 21 members identify with the Republican Party and/or Tea Party, while the remaining nine are Democrats. Senate President Russell Pearce sponsored the SB 1070 bill last year and began this year’s legislative session prepared to unleash 19 racist, anti-immigrant bills.

The capitalist economic crisis has taken a toll in Arizona, as everywhere. Arizona’s economy is heavily dependent on tourism and conventions, often referred to as the “hospitality industry,” where restaurant

and hotel housekeeping staff work for paltry wages while big hotel chains rake in the bucks. With the passage of SB 1070, a boycott of Arizona was initiated.

The Boycott Arizona campaign, contrary to claims made by both industry and state officials, has had an impact. The CEOs of 60 corporations and industry groups with interests in Arizona, ranging from Wells Fargo Bank, Intel and Nestle-Purina to Vanguard Health Systems, sent a letter to Pearce insisting that he stop passage of anti-immigrant legislation in Arizona. This letter was made public on March 16, one day before the Senate committee vote. It surely was responsible for some of the right-wing defections from Pearce, showing how much the Tea Party crowd defers to big business.

After the defeat of the five bills, some confusion was generated when an attorney representing the National Council of La Raza held a press conference to say that the boycott might be ended if the five bills remained dead. On March 23, how-

ever, leaders of Puente and the National Day Labor Organizing Network held their own press conference in Phoenix to announce that the boycott would continue until SB 1070 and all anti-immigrant laws are repealed.

It wasn’t only Boycott Arizona that had troubled these bosses and their Tea Party servants. The week of March 14 was spring break for Arizona high schools, colleges and universities. Many students spent the week at the state Capitol, protesting the bills and challenging right-wing lawmakers wherever they went.

The sight of these youth must have brought visions of the Wisconsin Capitol to the legislators’ minds. The resistance in Arizona after passage of SB 1070 — interstate highways were blocked, streets were filled with protesters, huge banners were dropped from buildings — has not gone away. It may have subsided, but the outrage is ever-present, bubbling just below the surface, and these legislators fear causing it to burst forth once again. □

SNCC women recount Civil Rights struggles

By Dolores Cox
Harlem, N.Y.

A longer version of this article, along with a review of “Hands on the Freedom Plow” (“SNCC women were fierce activists” by Abayomi Azikiwe, Feb. 11) can be found online at www.workers.org.

Women were on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts played

active roles. And when they got together they were anything but ordinary; they were essential to the movement. They were the women working in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee against the Southern apartheid system.

Fifteen years ago SNCC women decided they wanted to tell their stories in their own words. So four to five times a year they met in Baltimore to begin writing. Their book, “Hands on the Freedom

Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC,” was published in 2010.

On March 12, six of the book’s editors and contributors — Judy Robinson, Gloria Richardson, Muriel Tillinghast, Dorothy Zellner, Angeline Butler and Marilyn Fletcher — appeared at the renowned Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, N.Y. Each spoke about her memories of being in the movement.

The women’s oral histories included their early childhoods, as well as how and why they joined SNCC. Collectively, they had a social consciousness, and said they were inspired by the sacrifices of others, a love for humanity and a belief in equality, justice and freedom for everyone.



Dorothy Zellner, left, with Dolores Cox.

WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

SNCC women took a stand against the war in Vietnam, noting that Black soldiers risked their lives abroad for the U.S., which denied them rights at home. They fought for gay rights and political prisoners. They were involved in encour-

‘Peace parade’ challenges Boston status quo

By Steve Gillis
Vice President, Boston School Bus Drivers Steelworkers union Local 8751

Nearly 1,000 marchers, led by the Smedley D. Butler Brigade of Veterans for Peace, withstood chilly winds and South Boston’s bitter history of racism and anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer discrimination when they conducted a “Peace Parade” through South Boston’s neighborhoods on March 20. They marched one mile behind the official St. Patrick’s Day parade, which had many military and ROTC contingents.

With the backing of the U.S. Supreme Court, the official parade has legally banned anti-war and LGBTQ groups from participating. In 1992 the Irish American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston formed a contingent in the parade, but it was met with bigotry, epithets, jeers, snowballs, bottles and a lawsuit by the Allied War Veterans Council, claiming the right of “private” parade sponsors to discriminate against anyone they choose. The Supreme Court infamously upheld that in 1995.

This year Vets for Peace applied and fought for a separate march permit for the same day and the same streets. They won this right in local courts, declared it a victory in the struggle against discrimination, and invited all LGBTQ groups, anti-war organizations and unions to take back the streets of South Boston with them in a Peace Parade.

Pat Scanlon, a Vietnam War veteran and coordinator of the Greater Boston Chapter of Veterans For Peace, courageously led the Peace Parade onto Broadway Street and into the crowds of revelers. Marchers included Vets for Peace, several LGBTQ rights



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

groups, anti-war activists and unionists from the Service Employees, Steelworkers and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. They chanted and demanded an end to the wars; bring the troops home now; money for human needs, not war; and an end to anti-LGBTQ bigotry. They strutted to the sound of their own marching band and to the School Bus Drivers’ sound truck blasting the Street Dogs’ “Power in the Union!”

While there were some slurs and other invectives displayed toward the peace marchers, the vast majority lining the streets and on their porches loudly and enthusiastically cheered the Peace Parade’s contingents and message. Hundreds jumped police lines to dance and march with the officially banned vets. Spectators planted hugs and green-beaded necklaces on the rainbow-festooned marchers, many of whom were carrying placards denouncing the bombing of Libya. Fists in the air greeted the union folks bringing up the rear flank with signs proclaiming “We Stand With Wisconsin Workers” and “Stop School Closings!”

If the war establishment was counting on support and backlash from the old South Boston, they were likely deeply disappointed by the display of unity and solidarity marching, chanting, singing and dancing up Broadway Street. □

PENNSYLVANIA

Education funds cut

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Demonstrating once again that his top priority is to boost corporate profits at the expense of Pennsylvania workers and poor, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett’s budget for 2011-12 contains \$1.65 billion in funding cuts to education — but it increases funding for prisons and police by \$1.9 billion.

In the spirit of the workers and students in Wisconsin, protests against Corbett’s proposed budget cuts are taking place across the state. Hundreds of teachers, students and parents mobilized by the Teacher Action Group in Philadelphia have protested outside the school district offices to demand equitable funding.

Two demonstrations are planned for March 30 to protest the governor’s budget, including a noontime student rally at Temple University and a 4 p.m. rally for “Education, Not Incarceration,” starting at Philadelphia Municipal Court at 13th and Filbert streets.

The proposed budget completely elimi-

nates funding for many important programs that benefit poor and working class children. Low-income school districts across the state, many of them in African-American communities, will be hardest hit if Corbett’s plan to cut state Basic Education Funding by \$550 million goes through.

The budget would eliminate an existing state policy that now reimburses public school districts that lose revenue when students get vouchers to attend private charter schools. The budget calls for a \$224 million cut in the reimbursement program.

The proposed cuts are not spread equitably. Some schools with the greatest student poverty rates face cuts of more than \$35,000 per classroom, while schools in the state’s wealthiest districts face cuts of less than \$2,500 per classroom.

Already ranked among the worst states in the U.S. in not covering its share of education costs, Pennsylvania’s portion would drop to 37 percent if Corbett’s cuts go through. Many other states pay close to 50 percent of total costs.

The cuts won’t save taxpayers any money, since local school districts will be

WISCONSIN

Workers, students continue fight

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker directed the state's Legislative Reference Bureau to post online the anti-union bill that he signed on March 11. This is his latest attempt to bust the state's public sector unions and attack their collective bargaining rights.

Walker contends the bill is now law because it was published and vows that his administration "will carry out the law as required." However, the LRB's chief says that the law hasn't taken effect because the Wisconsin secretary of state — who publishes the state's bills — is adhering to a judge's order not to publish the bill in the Wisconsin State Journal. Publishing would make the bill legal and enforceable.

Walker's legislation was passed by the majority-Republican Legislature on March 10. Subsequently, Dane County Circuit Judge Maryann Sumi issued a temporary restraining order barring the law from going into effect. Sumi issued the TRO because the Legislature violated open meeting laws while attempting to pass the bill. She enjoined the secretary of state's office from publishing it.

The Department of Administration has appealed Sumi's ruling to the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, which declined to hear the case and sent the motion to the state's Supreme Court. It hasn't yet decided if that court will hear the motion to dismiss the injunction.

Reaction breeds resistance

The governor's moves touched off another firestorm of resistance throughout

the state, with protests in Madison and elsewhere.

"To ram through a bill attacking workers on the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire is a tragedy," said Stephanie Bloomingdale, secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO on March 25. "Clearly Scott Walker wants to roll back worker rights to a time where Triangle-like conditions were rampant and will use any means necessary to achieve his agenda." (<http://wisafclcio.typepad.com/>)

Wisconsin Resists and other organizations are mobilizing to pack the courts any time there is a hearing over the bill. Unions, including Madison's Firefighters Local 311 and the Laborer's union, have filed lawsuits over the governor's and the Legislature's illegal actions.

Workers' rights supporters are not only relying on the courts. They are mobilizing statewide to kill these union-busting bills and stop the governor's proposal for cutting billions of dollars from the upcoming state budget.

Every day statewide protests, rallies, candlelight vigils and other actions go on at the state Capitol. Walker is opposed everywhere he speaks. On March 24, the Milwaukee County Labor Council, along with its student and community allies, mobilized hundreds to confront him at a political fundraiser.

The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO sponsored a major rally at the Fox Valley Labor Temple in Neenah, Wis., on March 26. The federation said, "We are making history in Wisconsin and we aren't stopping



Workers in Bangladesh support Wisconsin struggle.

now! Union workers, nonunion workers, students and activists have been joined by mothers, fathers, grandparents, children, veterans and concerned citizens to raise their voice against Gov. Walker's extreme plans" which would limit workers' rights, cut needed services, harm education and more. (www.wisafclcio.org)

Solidarity demonstrations with Wisconsin's workers and poor communities are also taking place around the U.S. On March 26, a 15,000-person-strong rally took place in Los Angeles. It featured Mahlon Mitchell, the first African-American president of the Wisconsin Firefighters Association.

April actions, solidarity

There will be solidarity actions across the U.S. on April 4, the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. They will support the workers in Wisconsin and oppose union busting and other anti-people attacks. The Jobs With Justice and AFL-CIO websites have more informa-

tion (www.jwj.org and www.aflcio.org).

In Wisconsin, many April actions are being organized. On April 2, at "A March Fit for a King," the people of Milwaukee will commemorate Dr. King's legacy and stand for economic justice and basic human rights. Event leaflets oppose Walker's "reckless" budget that "cuts education, health care, transportation, and other services" for working people. They assert, "Milwaukee, we will stand up and take back our state and our city." Sponsors include Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope, NAACP Milwaukee and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 82.

Upcoming events in Madison supporting state workers include an April 2 Labor Notes conference; an all-day cultural event, "Forward Wisconsin Festival," on April 3, sponsored by the IATSE Local 251 Union stagehands; and a People's Assembly on April 9-10 organized by the Wisconsin Wave.

International support, solidarity messages and other assistance continue.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of Bangladesh's National Garment Workers Federation, sent a letter of solidarity, which is posted at Defend Wisconsin's website. It lauds U.S. workers "who have taken to the streets and Capitols to reject the attempts to deny them ... their rights to collectively bargain, and to decide on the conditions of their labor. Their resistance has been inspirational to the labor movement and to working people all over the globe." (www.DefendWisconsin.org) □

UAW seeks 'partnership' with bosses

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

The United Auto Workers wrapped up its three-day "Special Bargaining Convention" in Detroit on March 24 with a spirited march in solidarity with public workers and against Wall Street. Operations at Bank of America were even shut down for half an hour by a contingent of demonstrators, led by UAW President Bob King, who went inside the bank. (See related photo story.) The UAW is a key player in the Detroit-based People Before Banks coalition.

The thrust of the convention, however, was not to energize the delegates with a militant, confrontational strategy against capital. Instead, the convention's omni-

bus resolution made over 20 separate references to "partnership" or "teamwork" or "working with employers." There were nearly as many appeals to "the middle class" where there should have been language pushing working-class solidarity.

With the crisis facing the UAW now — as a result of decades of capitalist restructuring — it boggles the mind to think that the once-mighty union would seek a partnership with the bosses who created the crisis. In 1979 the union had 1.5 million members compared to 350,000 today. Half a million once worked for General Motors. Now UAW members number 49,000 at GM and their numbers are even lower at Ford and Chrysler.

forced to pick up the tab. For the state's poorest school districts, this extra burden will mean teacher layoffs if not outright closure of schools. The proposed cuts may also force school districts to end all-day kindergarten, putting an additional burden on working parents.

In addition to the draconian cuts proposed for pre-K-to-12 education, state funding for Pennsylvania's 14 state-owned universities and four "state-related" universities, including Temple University and Lincoln, would be cut by \$625 million — about 50 percent.

Penn State College stands to lose more than 50 percent of its state funding. At the same time, Corbett has proposed spending \$400 million on a new, 4,000-inmate facility at Graterford prison. The project would include expansion of the prison's death row.

Pennsylvania's prison industry spends from \$32,000 per capita for young prisoners to \$200,000 per capita for older prisoners each year. The state incarcer-

ated four times as many people in 2011 as it did 20 years ago, despite a drop in overall crime.

Ironically, the most efficient and humane solution to cutting crime and reducing prison costs is to provide greater access to education, and more and better paying jobs. Education funding cuts will also mean the elimination of jobs for teachers and school support staff.

Shortly before releasing his March 8 budget, Corbett "quietly and unilaterally approved an estimated \$200 million in tax breaks for businesses ... by adopting new federal tax rules." Businesses would be allowed to "write off the entire cost of expenses in one year, rather than spreading the write-off out over several years." (Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, March 5)

Corbett refused to consider a tax on natural gas drilling that could generate nearly \$570 million by 2015. The state also has a so-called "Delaware loophole," allowing corporations with headquarters elsewhere to avoid paying taxes in Pennsylvania. □

In 2007 job security promises were the carrot used to extract humiliating concessions from UAW members at the Detroit Three. In 2009 when the bosses wanted still more, they used the club of fear over a threatened Chapter Seven liquidation. The end result was a contract, imposed on a shrunken workforce, that took away many of the gains won though long strikes from the 1940s through the 1960s.

A divisive two-tier pay scale has the union's newest members working for half the pay of their higher seniority counterparts doing the same work. Many have been hired as temporary and/or part-time — known internationally as "precarious" — workers. In the past year not a single hourly worker hired by Ford has been made permanent.

'No solidarity with two-tier!'

Some convention delegates challenged the official line. As part of a campaign initiated by the Autoworkers Caravan to overturn two-tier pay scales, they strode to the microphones in T-shirts reading "Do the math: = pay 4 = work = solidarity." Scott Houldieson, representing UAW Local 551 in Chicago, called for a firm commitment to make all workers classified as temporary become permanent employees.

Al Benchich of Local 909 in Detroit argued against the statement: "We are moving on a path that no longer presumes an adversarial work environment." He pointed out, "Whether you work in the public sector or the private sector, everything they are doing to us is adversarial."

Despite the flawed strategy of labor-corporate cooperation, the convention resolution might appear to be full of ambitious and laudatory goals. It is full of language addressing the need to end precari-

ous work, provide "retirement security," win job protections and "justice for new hires," and "look to the future." But this is only a half-hearted call to partially restore what UAW members took for granted until their own leaders urged them to relinquish their hard-fought gains.

The UAW, like most unions, has taken quite a beating in recent years. It has been seriously weakened, and now the leadership has no answers other than to continue down the same disastrous path that got them into the rotten situation to begin with.

The perceived need to accommodate the capitalist ruling class in order to stave off another vicious assault partly explains the orientation away from class struggle — and toward "converting" their class opponents. But employing the same failed strategy again will not yield different results. Nice words about "advancing our social vision" are no match for an aggressive capitalist strategy that seeks to drive down the cost of labor power for all workers in order to maximize profits.

Many autoworkers are inspired by the current working-class upsurge and solidarity seen in Wisconsin and beginning elsewhere around the country. They would respond well to a call to strike back against the real partnership — the company bosses, the government and the banks that together exploited the bankruptcy process to try to destroy the UAW.

They would have been happy if, on the way to the bank, the march stopped to protest outside the single biggest destroyer of manufacturing jobs since the recession began. That would be none other than General Motors.

Martha Grevatt is a 23-year UAW Chrysler worker. Email: mgrevatt@workers.org

Reaction, cutbacks bring working-class resistance

By Fred Goldstein

The massive demonstrations and occupation of the Capitol in Madison, Wis., signal the end of three decades of union retreat. This struggle has awakened a new activism, resistance and solidarity by labor, communities and students not seen in this country in many decades.

The bankers and bosses continue to move relentlessly in a right-wing, anti-labor, anti-people direction. Corporate puppets in state houses across the country are intent on budget cuts and attacks on public employees, education and social services.

But the rank and file down below are moving in the opposite direction — the direction of resistance. Wisconsin was only the first step. The growing conflict between these two opposing class forces is headed toward a revival of the class struggle on a broad basis.

The intransigence of the budget-cutters is pushing all sectors of the masses in the direction of forging a united struggle. The entire working-class population — employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized, youth and seniors, gay and straight, disabled, immigrants, documented and undocumented — is sharply targeted by this new stage of capitalist austerity.

The Washington Post summed things up on March 25: “Across the country, governors and legislators are moving to squeeze the pay and benefits of state and local government workers, privatize a wide range of public services and facilities, and sharply reduce state funding for programs that were once all but untouchable, including public schools, universities and unemployment benefits. They’re aiming to close budget gaps projected to be a cumulative \$125 billion next year.”

They plan to take \$125 billion away from the people and hand it over to the banks and bondholders who are demanding repayment of the state and municipal debt. These parasitic millionaires and billionaires, who live off the public treasury, got bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars during the financial meltdown. And they continue to take — even as the unemployment crisis, the low-wage crisis, the foreclosure crisis, the hunger crisis and the health care crisis bring increasing suffering

and hardship to tens of millions.

Protests, solidarity continue

Gov. Scott Walker in Wisconsin is their advance man. But Walker and his cohorts did not reckon on the Madison teachers walking out for three days, followed by their students. They did not reckon on the occupation of the Capitol for two weeks. And the bankers did not expect that tens of thousands of workers would come from all over the country to support the Wisconsin struggle.

Nor did they expect tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters to demonstrate in solidarity in cities all over the country, large and small, and to fight back against their own budget-cutters.

Demonstrations of solidarity and resistance have taken place at state houses and government buildings in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, New York, Illinois, Iowa, Rhode Island and Florida — all within the last month. And they are not slowing down.

Some 15,000 people demonstrated in Los Angeles on Solidarity Saturday, March 26. Mahlon Mitchell, the head of the Wisconsin State Firefighters Association and the first Black president of that union — who has played a prominent role in the struggle — was a main speaker at the rally, along with many other union officials.

In New York on March 24, several thousand demonstrators rallied at City Hall and marched to Wall Street to protest Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s \$132 billion budget cuts and to express solidarity with Wisconsin. While just a beginning, it was important because, like Los Angeles, New York is a bastion of the multinational working class in a highly unionized state. The demonstration was an alliance among unions, students and community organizations.

Labor, student and community activists in Wisconsin are continuing the struggle after the illegal passage of Walk-



WWW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Wisconsin Firefighters president Mahlon Mitchell leads March 26 Los Angeles march.

er’s union-busting bill. Teachers in Michigan have been told by their union to begin saving up in case of a strike — which would be illegal according to Michigan anti-labor law.

Unions become ‘organizing centers of the working class’

No one can foretell how this new phase of the struggle will evolve. What is certain is that Wisconsin has launched a new phase of union activism and solidarity. Moreover, community organizations and activists who have been fighting for years have consciously identified their causes with the rights of public workers and unions. The same can be said for student organizations and activists. They all understand the potential power of the organized working class and are moving toward one another in practice.

This is a move in the direction of a broader concept of the class struggle. It will hopefully be fully embraced by the unions, by rank-and-file leaders especially, who seek to build the strongest front in the struggle.

The direction for the movement to take was advocated by none other than Karl Marx in 1866, in his famous address to the First International on “The Future of the Unions”:

“Apart from their original purpose, they [the unions] must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction. Considering themselves as acting as the champions of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the non-society men [unorganized workers — ed.] into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as agricultural laborers, rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.” (Cited in Goldstein, “Low-Wage Capitalism,” World View Forum, 2008)

Marx pointed in the direction of a broad, all-encompassing vision of the union movement, a social movement uniting the struggles of all the exploited and oppressed. This is the direction that all revolutionary Marxists and activists must promote.

This new stage is not a temporary development. It is driven by profound forces. This author wrote in “Low-Wage Capitalism”: “Globalization, capitalist restructuring, the hardships of low-wage capitalism, and growing racism and national oppression are creating the material basis for a new era of rebellion and class unity. As the working class has become poorer, the proportion of African-American, Latino/a, Asian, women, lesbian, gay, bi and trans workers has become greater. At the same time white workers have also become poorer.”

These reactionary forces are “destroying the basis for class collaboration and class compromise with the bosses. These changes are creating the foundation for building a broad working-class movement which fights for the multinational working class as a whole. ...

“The rank and file of the workers’ movement will be compelled by new conditions to assert itself and exercise leadership in the struggle. Such a movement, because it is rooted in the communities of the working class and the oppressed, will be able to go beyond narrow trade unionism, which limits itself to bargaining for wages and conditions, and fight for economic, social, and political justice on all fronts in the struggle against capitalism, and ultimately against the condition of wage slavery itself.”

Email: fgoldstein@workers.org

Union protest demands: ‘Tax the banks’

Thousands of United Auto Workers and supporters took to the streets of downtown Detroit March 24 to “tell big bankers it’s time for them to pay their fair share.” Chants against Bank of America echoed off tall buildings as UAW President Bob King denounced the taxpayer-funded bailouts banks received. He demanded they be forced to pay taxes like working people have to.

A UAW email stated: “This [economic] crisis has ... caused massive tax revenue shortfalls for the federal government and state governments across the country: nearly \$300 billion combined for 50 states in the years since the crisis began. To deal with these budget woes, politicians are cutting public spending, laying off teachers, attacking public-sector workers, raiding pensions, closing hospitals, and eliminating essential services for



children, veterans and the elderly.

“Six banks — Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley — together paid income tax at an approximate rate of 11 percent of their pre-tax U.S. earnings in 2009 and 2010. Had they paid the 35 percent they are legally mandated to pay, the federal government would have received an additional \$13 billion in tax revenue. This would cover more than two years of salaries for the 132,000 teacher jobs lost since the economic crisis began in 2008.”

— Report and photo by Kris Hamel

BOSTON INJUSTICE

Chuck Turner sent to jail

For decades, Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner has been a leading progressive activist on issues affecting the African-American communities in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, Mass. He has supported working people’s struggles for decent jobs and against employment discrimination, fought against resegregation of the Boston public schools, and been in the forefront of the movements to oppose U.S. wars abroad and to demand funding for community needs, not the Pentagon.

Turner was the target of an FBI sting operation and racist federal prosecution. He was falsely convicted of corruption — of accepting a \$1,000 bribe. In January, federal Judge Douglas P. Woodlock sentenced Turner, who is 70 years old, to a stiff three-year prison term, denying him a stay while his appeal is pending, or any leniency. Turner began serving his sentence on March 25.

Turner wrote a letter to his supporters, which appeared in the Bay State Banner. In it he says, “It seems inconceivable that after 46 years of service to my people and my community, I am about to spend three years in a federal lockup. However, as the song says, ‘Keep your eyes on the prize.’” He asks everyone not to “let the defeats in the struggle for justice distract,” and says that it’s most important to “stand up and fight back whenever you see injustice.”

Turner says that although the government aimed to “break our spirit, they can’t break mine.” He reiterates that he cannot be silenced, that “while this system can put my body in jail, my spirit and voice remain free.”

Check for updates at www.SupportChuckTurner.com. Write to Chuck Turner, Hazelwood Penitentiary, P.O. Box 2000, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525.

— Frank Neisser

Thousands march against 'austerity'

By LeiLani Dowell
New York

As New York state's legislature and governor were meeting to plan a budget that will cut billions in social spending, thousands of New York's students, workers and community activists participated in a "Day of Rage" on March 24. The rally, organized by a coalition of students, labor unions and community activists called New Yorkers Against the Budget Cuts, opened with a rally at City Hall that challenged billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his offensive against public education. It then marched to the city's financial district — where billions of dollars are hoarded while the people of New York suffer.

In a press statement, Larry Hales of the CUNY Mobilization Network said that organizers planned a march to Wall Street "to highlight the source of the problem." He noted, "The banks and Wall Street investors have looted the public treasury while giving nothing back. All the budget cuts could be avoided simply by making the banks and investors pay their share of taxes. We are organizing to stop layoffs and budget cuts and to reclaim the public funds to use them for the workers, com-

munities and students."

Brenda Stokely, former president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 1707 and a co-founder of the Million Worker March Movement, said, "The public is being misled to believe that they should be against workers' right to organize and bargain for just wages, benefits and work conditions. Workers cannot allow ourselves to be scapegoated or divided by those who created this economic disaster."

Large contingents included students from the Hunter College School of Social Work and AFSCME District Council 37. Members of the Professional Staff Congress at the City University of New York attended, as did students from Brooklyn College. Speakers at the rally included Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 808; Lucy Pagoza of Honduras USA Resistencia and the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights; and New York City Councilperson Charles Barron.

The rally's demands included jobs, not layoffs; affordable housing; an end to cuts in social services; no union busting or privatization; an extension of the mil-



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

lionaire tax, which has a higher personal income tax rate for the wealthy that currently brings the city \$1.5 billion in revenue; the closing of tax loopholes that allow corporations to avoid paying taxes; a return of the stock transfer tax, which would impose a tax on every purchase of a share of stock; and restoring community control of schools and an end to mayoral control.

A follow-up meeting will be held on March 30 to discuss future plans, including coalition building, an April 4 day of action in solidarity with Wisconsin workers, the April 9 anti-war protests called by the United National Antiwar Committee, and the annual May 1 protest for worker and immigrant rights. For more information visit march24ny.wordpress.com. □

Student walk-out hits education cuts

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Hundreds of students throughout the city walked out of schools on March 23 and converged on Boston School Department Headquarters to protest the School Committee's budget vote to close or merge 19 schools and cut more than 200 jobs.

The students were joined by parents, teachers, school bus drivers and community activists in a protest organized by El Movimiento for Ethnic Studies in Boston Public Schools and the Coalition for Equal Quality Education. Three busloads of members of the Boston School Bus Union, Steelworkers Local 8751 participated in the spirited protest.

When the meeting began, Boston police and school department officials attempted



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

to prevent the students from entering the building. The students chanted "Whose building? Our building!" and "Let us in!" as their supporters insisted on their right to be there. The people prevailed, and the

meeting chamber was packed to overflowing. In fact, it spilled out into the hallway.

As the budget was presented, the crowd held up signs reading "No to school closings" and "No resegregation of Boston schools." Signs called for "Equal quality education" and demanded "Fund our schools, not bank bailouts and war!"

The students surrounded the officials who presented the budget, and they held up a coffin, which represented the death of public education. They kept up the chant

"S.O.S., Save Our Schools!"

More than two dozen speakers, many of them students, condemned the budget-cutting vote. Several students pointed out the hypocrisy of the School Department's slogan of "Focus on Children." They said the focus was on money, not children, and that closing the schools would increase class sizes and dropout rates and would deny Boston students their future.

"The U.S. can give money to ... drop a

bomb on Libya, but they can't give money to our education," said Sackona Fitts, a Fenway High School sophomore. "Who are we? We are the youth. We are the next generation. We're going to do everything we can." (boston.com, March 24)

Fernando Fernii Rodriguez, a student leader from the Social Justice Academy, one of the schools being closed, applauded the students' unity and action and called for students to continue to organize. Speakers from the Coalition for Equal Quality Education congratulated the students on their action and called for the struggle to continue. City Councilor Charles Yancey called on the School Committee to vote "No."

The Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts has filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights showing that the closings discriminate against Black and Latino/a students.

Although the School Committee passed the budget unanimously, the Coalition for Equal Quality Education plans to meet March 30 to organize further protests targeting the City Council and the mayor. □

ATLANTA

Rally vs. anti-immigrant bill

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

For more than three hours in midday on March 24, thousands of people packed the street in front of the Georgia State Capitol to protest Arizona copycat bills that would legalize racial profiling and institute a series of anti-immigrant measures.

HB 87 and SB 40 each passed through their legislature chamber and are going to a reconciliation committee. The bills are nearly identical, but the House bill has even more draconian elements.

Organizers of the "Rally for Truth and Dignity" are mounting an appeal to recently elected Gov. Nathan Deal to veto any such new Jim Crow legislation. "Jim Crow" refers to laws that instituted racial segregation for African Americans from 1876 to 1965 before they were eradicated by the Civil Rights Movement. The new law would provide a cover for racial profiling so that police agencies could demand citizenship papers from those they "reasonably" suspect are undocumented.

Failure to carry the proper identification

would result in arrest and a trip to jail. Local law enforcement would then be mandated to deliver the person into Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody.

Georgia legislators have focused on bills targeting undocumented immigrants while making little or no progress to alleviate the massive number of foreclosures, lack of trauma care, record unemployment, transportation gridlock and education shortfalls that impact millions of people throughout the state.

More than 70 organizations endorsed the March 24 rally. Faith leaders, students and business people; elected officials including U.S. Rep. John Lewis; immigrants from Korea, China, Sudan, the Caribbean, Burma, Mexico and elsewhere; and representatives of organized labor, lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer, and civil rights organizations took the stage to denounce the bills. Hundreds of high school and college students joined workers from dozens of cities and counties who came with their families.

The Grammy-winning duo, the Indigo Girls, performed to the crowd's delight. □

Protest slams N.Y. budget cuts

Special to Workers World
Albany, N.Y.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has decided that the alleged \$10 billion budget deficit in the state will be settled by cutting vital public services, like Medicaid and education, and eliminating public employees' jobs. However, the highest earners making more than \$200,000 a year will get a tax reduction.

Via televised address on his web page, Cuomo announced, "I won't compromise on this issue."

By his actions he is refusing to bargain with state employees and others affected by these drastic cuts.

These budget cuts will greatly affect the City University of New York. A major part of CUNY's funds come from the state. The system's senior colleges will lose \$95.1 million and its community colleges will lose \$17.5 million if the budget passes as

it has been proposed without changes.

The PSC, an American Federation of Teachers local that represents 20,000 CUNY faculty members and staff, organized a direct-action protest to stop these crippling cuts at the New York state Capitol.

Chanting "Tax the rich, not the poor!" and "No cuts to CUNY," five busloads of PSC members and supporters from community groups, schools and colleges went to Albany on March 23. They marched into the Executive Chamber and sat down in front of Cuomo's office, blocking access. Thirty-three participants were arrested.

Professional Staff Congress President Barbara Bowen, who was one of those arrested, said: "We made the decision to risk arrest because we cannot allow the injustice of this budget to stand. We have lobbied, rallied and written in support of a fair budget, but our voices have not been

Continued on page 8

Youths protest attack on Libya

By Andy Koch
Raleigh, N.C.

Youth activists and community members gathered in front of North Carolina’s Federal Building in Raleigh on March 23 to denounce the war on Washington’s newest target of aggression: the North African state of Libya.

North Carolina, home to the enormous U.S. army base at Fort Bragg, is often touted by state officials as “the most military-friendly state.” The slogan is part of a public relations push to expand existing bases and make North Carolina even more dependent on military money.

Despite this dependence, supportive motorists sent continual honks and shout-outs to the demonstrators. Those North Carolina residents were no doubt dis-

March 23 anti-war protest.

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

turbed by the strong feeling of militaristic déjà-vu brought on by the news of the 118 U.S. cruise missiles unleashed on Libya only days before. It wasn’t mentioned much on CNN or Fox News, but the recent blitz of firepower on the African nation came on the eighth anniversary of the start of the United States’ war on Iraq, another oil-rich former colony.

Members of Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) held handmade signs and chanted “No justice, no peace!



U.S. out of the Middle East!” Addressing the group, activist Kosta Harlan highlighted the connection between endless war abroad and poverty and repression at home. “How can they tell us that there’s no money for people’s needs, that we need to cut back,” Harlan said, “when each of the missiles they are pounding Libya with right now costs over \$1 million? It’s insane!”

As a local organizer for the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, Harlan reminded the demonstrators that in the past year the government has stepped up its efforts

to jail and silence anti-war activists with raids, subpoenas and the Federal Grand Jury system. “We need a strong anti-war movement now more than ever,” Harlan said, “and we aren’t going to let the FBI stop us.”

Students for a Democratic Society at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill endorsed and sent people, as did NC HEAT, the group fighting against resegregation of the schools, and Raleigh Fruit Cakes, an lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer organization. □

Senegalese at NYC protest say: ‘Wade must go!’

Special to Workers World

Senegalese immigrants took to the streets of Harlem in New York City on March 19 in protest against the regime of President Abdoulaye Wade. They rallied in front of the Senegalese Consulate on East 125th Street and then marched to an area along West 116th Street known as “Little Senegal” due to the growing Senegalese population living and working there.

According to Fallou Gueye, a member of the organizing committee for the march, it focused on three main issues facing Senegalese in the diaspora: their right to participate in next February’s election for the president of Senegal; opposition to Wade’s candidacy in that election, which they say is illegal under the Senegal Constitution; and an unbearable rise in the cost of living.

This West African country, like so many others on the continent, has a rich past, but it was left impoverished by the slave trade and intense foreign exploitation by Dutch, Portuguese, British and French invaders beginning in the 1600s.

Gueye is also a member of the Secretariat of the Union of African Workers/Senegal, one of several political parties

and Senegalese groups in the U.S. that organized the protest.

Their slogans included “Enough is enough! Wade must go!” and demands to start the process of registering voters in the diaspora now.

Wade, who is 85, has been president since 2000. He had tried to advance his son as a presidential candidate, said Gueye, “but his plan has failed because of a strong opposition by the political parties, the civil society groups and even within his entourage or party.” Speakers at the protest said Wade’s attempt to run again is a violation of the two-term limit set by the Senegalese Constitution. Since his first election, the term of the presidency has been reduced from seven to five years amid growing charges of corruption.

In Senegal, as in New York, many marches, rallies, sit-ins, protests and rap concerts, authorized and unauthorized, took place on March 19, the date of Wade’s first election in 2000 and the end of 40 years of power by the so-called “Socialist” Party of Leopold Senghor and Abdou Diouf. People took to the streets in Dakar and other parts of the country to voice their anger and disappointment in Wade’s politics and to ask him to resign. □

Protest slams N.Y. budget cuts

Continued from page 7

heard. Albany is on the verge of passing a budget that is so damaging to our students and so fundamentally unjust that we had to take a stand. “

As she was led away in handcuffs, Susan DeRaimo, an adjunct teacher in the English as a Second Language program at City College, told Fox23 Albany News, “My students — taxi drivers, home health aides — should be able to go to CUNY for free like I did.”

Six students were arrested along with 27 PSC members. They all were charged with disorderly conduct and released after a few hours with a desk appearance ticket.

State Sens. Ruben Diaz Sr. of the Bronx and Bill Perkins of Bedford-Stuyvesant briefly took part in the protest, which got wide press coverage in New York and around the country.

For more information on upcoming PSC actions, see www.psc-cuny.org. □

GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediak

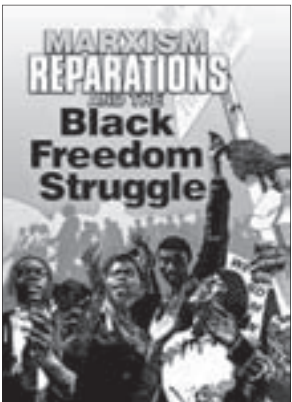
The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza’s courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people’s media is breaking the mainstream media’s information blockade on this event.

Available from Leftbooks.com



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes: **Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** Leilani Dowell **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad **Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal **Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** John Parker **Racism & Poverty in the Delta** Larry Hales **Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions** Pat Chin



Available from Leftbooks.com

As anti-war sentiment grows

Imperialists escalate bombing operations over Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

After more than a week of intensive bombing of the North African state of Libya, U.S. President Barack Obama on March 28 went on television to provide a rationale for beginning yet another war against a developing country with a majority Muslim population. He claimed the U.S. is no longer leading the campaign to overthrow the Libyan government and install a puppet-regime compliant to the West. However, the bulk of the firepower used in the war is being supplied by the Pentagon.

Obama announced that full command of the war against Libya was being rapidly transferred to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, the U.S. government founded NATO and still controls this imperialist military alliance.

A Canadian, Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, has been designated operational commander for the war against Libya. On March 21, Canadian CF-18 fighter jets flew their initial bombing missions over Libya amid claims by Defense Minister Peter MacKay that Ottawa had a “moral duty” to participate in the war in North Africa. All four opposition parties in the Canadian Parliament endorsed the ruling Conservative Party’s decision.

Reports indicate that warplanes from the U.S., Britain, France, Canada, Italy, Denmark and Belgium are involved in aerial and sea bombardments of Libya. In addition, the U.S.-backed Gulf states of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have entered the campaign.

Since March 25, Qatari Mirage jets have flown alongside French aircraft in bombing operations over northeastern Libya. The Associated Press explained why: “The decisions by Qatar and UAE to join the coalition in Libya reflect their strong traditional ties to the United States and their desires to play a more active role internationally. The Gulf states rely on a strong regional U.S. military presence as a buffer against Iran, which is seen as a threat by the Gulf’s kings and sheiks.” (March 28)

Turkey, a recent member of NATO and a longtime base for U.S. military operations against Iraq and Afghanistan, will reportedly take control of the airport in the rebel-held city of Benghazi. Turkey’s naval forces will patrol areas between Crete and this northeastern Libyan city, where the rebellion against the Gadhafi government began on Feb. 17.

Bombing operations escalate

Meanwhile, Tornado aircraft flying from a base in Britain bombed Libyan government installations in the southern area of Sabha. Libya’s state news agency reported several casualties in the attacks.

Western imperialist airstrikes have provided cover for the rebel forces, which are seeking to recapture key cities they

lost to government forces in mid-March. Fierce fighting between the Libyan military and the rebels has taken place in Misrata, Nawfaliya and Sirte.

The current war against Libya represents the largest U.S. and Western European military deployment in the region since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The imperialists want to bring this North African state under their control not only to seize its vast oil resources but also to forestall any revolutionary shift in direction by the democratic movements in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia.

Analyst Michel Chossudovsky says the war is based on “outright lies by the international media: Bombs and missiles are presented as an instrument of peace and democratization. This is not a humanitarian operation. The war on Libya opens up a new regional war theater.” (Global Research, March 20)

Chossudovsky notes: “There are three distinct war theaters in the Middle East and Central Asia regions: Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. What is unfolding is a fourth U.S.-NATO War Theater in North Africa, with the risk of escalation.”

Nonetheless, the Libyan people are maintaining their resistance to the imperialist onslaught. Libyan forces have held off the rebels in Misrata and areas leading toward Sirte, despite heavy bombardment by U.S. and European war planes and naval forces.

Condemnations around the world

In Mali, a West African state, thousands of people demonstrated against the war on March 25 chanting, “Down with Obama! Down with Sarkozy!” The crowd marched through the capital of Bamako to the French and U.S. embassies. Public opinion throughout Africa has been highly critical of the Western states and their war against Libya. (Associated Press, March 25)

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe called the Western countries attacking Libya “bloody vampires.” South African President Jacob Zuma, after much internal criticism by the African National Congress Youth League and the Congress of South African Trade Unions over his government’s vote for U.N. Resolution 1973, called for an immediate cease-fire.

In Greece, youth supporting the Communist Party burned flags of the Europe-

an Union in protest against the war.

Demonstrations in solidarity with the Libyan government were held in Belgrade, Serbia. In Madrid thousands marched on March 26 protesting Spain’s involvement as a launching pad for attacks on Libya.

A statement issued by the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party (GC) called for demonstrations in countries that “participate in this affront to and crime against Africa, the African Diaspora, and World Humanity, until any and all of their regimes are changed.”

Min. Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam spoke out forcefully against the U.S. war on Libya. His remarks were broadcast widely on African-American formatted radio programs.

COSATU

Condemns foreign military occupation in Libya

Bongani Masuku, international relations secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, issued the following statement on behalf of the labor federation on March 22.

COSATU has reiterated its position in support of the legitimate and genuine struggles of the people and workers of the Middle East and North Africa for democracy, human dignity and social justice. In doing so, however, we seek to exercise caution [at] the manner Western powers claim to be advancing the struggle for democracy in that region.

In their own imagination, military occupation can deliver democracy to the masses. Is it not the same doctrine that failed in Iraq before, Afghanistan recently, and is it not inevitably bound to fail in Libya? This can be best described as helicopter democracy, which disempowers the masses in whose name the struggle for democracy is waged and renders them spectators as foreign powers arrogate [to] themselves the role of liberators.

It is very clear that the United Nations resolution fit into a well-designed scheme which was deliberately set by the big powers to ensure military occupation and regional reconfiguration to further

Former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney condemned the U.S. bombing, noting that Moammar Gadhafi is a target “because he has been a thorn in the side of anti-revolutionary forces since he took power in Libya, overthrowing the King and nationalizing the oil industry so that the people could benefit from their oil resources.”

On April 9-10 major anti-war demonstrations will take place in New York and San Francisco called by the United National Antiwar Committee, which has issued a statement opposing U.S. intervention in Libya.

The recent round of events in North Africa illustrates clearly that U.S. foreign policy has not changed at all under the Democratic administration of Barack Obama. □

assert imperialist domination and neoliberal economic orthodoxy in the interest of profiteering at all costs for their giant oil companies. It was further meant to ensure stage-managed “regime change” which sought to impose regimes that would best service their interests, as was the case with [former Egyptian president] Hosni Mubarak for a long time.

International solidarity does not mean foreign occupation or undermining the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of any country and peoples, but supporting the struggling masses to defeat an oppressor through their own struggle.

The abuse of the U.N. system to advance narrow corporatist interests of Western countries and their big multinationals [which], for too long, have been eager to secure for themselves the huge oil and natural gas reserves in this part of the world, discredits the standing of the U.N. in the eyes of the world. In particular, the double standards of the U.N. Security Council and the International Criminal Court are shocking.

The world is still waiting for action in relation to the war crimes charges against Israel following the findings of the Goldstone Report, and we have not seen anything close to that, except for continuous U.S. blocking, with the full support of the European Union, of any resolution holding Israel to account.

In this regard, we believe that the honesty of the U.N. in dealing with global problems is in doubt. We have not seen similar determination to deal with despots in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, where people are being killed and imprisoned for marching peacefully, state of emergencies have been declared and foreign forces have been called to reinforce against peaceful activities for democracy. Could this be explained by the fact that U.S. oil supplies are guaranteed by the existence of the despots running these countries, as with the U.S. military bases in this part of the world?

From Western Sahara to Palestine and Libya, foreign military and political occupation is wrong and must be fought with all the determination necessary. Wherever it happens, it threatens and substitutes the genuine struggles and role of the people in determining the future of their countries. □

LACKAWANNA, N.Y.

Yemeni-American community rallies against racism

The Lackawanna, N.Y., Yemeni community and supporters protested March 12 against a Lackawanna School Board member who is also a police dispatcher who reportedly posted anti-Arab, profanity-laced comments on his Facebook page. A strong outcry from the community forced his resignation from the school board. Muslim community leaders, however, noted that there is a pattern to these types of incidents of anti-Muslim bigotry and that this is by no means the end of community efforts to stop them.

One of those leaders said, “We trace our lineage in Lackawanna over 100 years now. How long do we have to be here be-

fore we’re recognized as stakeholders in this community?” (Buffalo News, March 12) The community is adjacent to what was the Bethlehem Steel Complex, which closed many years ago. Thousands of Arab workers toiled there for decades and lived in established communities surrounding the steel complex. A smaller community remains and has been the constant target of Homeland Security surveillance and harassment.

Community activists from nearby Buffalo attended the rally to stand in solidarity with their Yemeni sisters and brothers against all forms of bigotry and harassment.

— Bev Hiestand

Mumia’s book:
Jailhouse Lawyers
PRISONERS
DEFENDING
PRISONERS
V. THE U.S.A.

is available at
leftbooks.com



Japan’s nuclear disaster ‘made in USA’

It’s beyond time to stop the ruling class in both the U.S. and Japan from dumping human and financial costs onto the backs of the workers and poor of the world.

The U.S. subjected Japan to a nuclear holocaust in 1945 when its Air Force dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 65 years later, another nuclear disaster has the “Made in the U.S.A.” label on it, this time with the full participation and cooperation of the Japanese capitalist government and ruling class.

Japanese nuclear workers have made heroic efforts — some workers have been subjected to doses of radiation 10,000 times greater than is normally found near nuclear plants — but the struggle to limit the damages and avert a meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant 120 miles north of Tokyo continues with no end in sight. Radioactivity in the ocean near the plant was reported to be 1,800 times the normal “safe” level.

There are dreadful human costs caused by the catastrophe: disease from radiation, genetic damage to future generations and death. But the Japanese people are also undergoing a gigantic economic disaster. Japanese taxpayers may be forced to pay as much as 1 trillion yen (\$12 billion) to compensate businesses and individuals for damages from the nuclear accident. Japanese law limits the maximum cost for the Tokyo Electric Power Company, which owns the plant, to one-eighth of that amount.

The U.S. corporate giant General Electric built the Fukushima plant four decades ago. But GE will pay

nothing, protected by the “channeling law.” This agreement among the U.S., Japan and other countries ensures that liability for nuclear accidents and damages is channeled exclusively to the plant operators and the government.

GE is used to this kind of preferential treatment. The company’s current CEO, Jeffrey Immelt, is one of President Barack Obama’s close advisors. Although GE had over \$14 billion in profits last year, it will pay zero corporate taxes to the U.S. this year. Instead, it will **receive** a \$3.2 billion tax benefit! The General Electric Financial Division also received a whopping \$140 billion in federal-taxpayer-funded bailout money in 2008.

Around the world various energy companies are trumpeting the safety of nuclear power and urging the construction of even more plants. Left unsaid is the fact that no private nuclear company would consider building a nuclear plant unless a government agrees to pay for any damages caused by a future disaster.

Poor and working people in Japan, the U.S. and around the world are the ones paying for these nuclear plants, paying the costs of disaster and also guaranteeing the profits of the relatively small handful of people who own them. The workers at the plant, the community around them and the people in general should be the ones to make the decisions to shut down plants at immediate risk and demand protection from GE and other nuclear power giants, as well as accountability and reparations for the damages these corporations have already caused. □

A tribute from the Cuban Five Leonard Weinglass 1933-2011



Leonard Weinglass and Gerardo Hernández Nordelo

Leonard Weinglass, a leading progressive attorney and member of the National Lawyers Guild who represented political activists railroaded by the U.S. injustice system, died of cancer on March 23. He argued for the defense in such high-profile cases as those of the Chicago 7, Anthony Russo of the Pentagon Papers, Kathy Boudin, Angela Davis, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Macheteros of Puerto Rico, Palestinians known as the Los Angeles 8, and members of the Cuban Five. He also defended many lesser-known people caught up in mass arrests like the ones during a rebellion by the oppressed Black community of Newark in 1967.

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, one of the Cuban Five, wrote the following appreciation after hearing of Weinglass’ death.

Not that long ago Len came to visit me and we worked for several hours preparing for the next step of my appeal. I noticed at the time that he was tired. I was worried with his advanced age that he was driving alone after a long trip from New York. The weather was bad and the roads from the airport up to Victorville wind through the mountains surrounding the high desert. I mentioned my concern to him but he did not pay it any attention. That was the way he was, nothing stopped him.

When we would meet the same thing would always happen. At some point in our conversation, while listening to him talk, my mind would separate from his words and I would focus on the person. I would realize that here is this great man, the tremendous lawyer, the legendary fighter for justice, right here in front of me. I told him that I had seen images of him in documentaries on TV dedicating himself to important legal cases that he had participated in from a very young age. With pride I would tell people watching, “That is the lawyer for the Five.” It did not matter how much I read or heard about Len, I knew through

his humility and modesty that there was a lot I still had to discover about this man who had dedicated his life to his profession.

Len always insisted that our case, like the others that he had dedicated lots of his time to, was essentially a political one. He cautioned us from the start that this struggle would be long and difficult. His experience with the “system” had taught him that. For our part, beyond the professional relationship we had, we always thought of him as a compañero in the battle for justice.

Len leaves us at an important moment, but he leaves us prepared to carry on the path. On more than one occasion he expressed his admiration and respect for the other lawyers on our legal team, and I think that he has left confident that our case is in good hands.

Like other people, who during these years have accompanied us in our struggle to make justice prevail, he will not be with us to see the inevitable triumph. We are confident that day will arrive and to Len, and to all the others, we will pay them a well-deserved tribute in our homeland.

On behalf of the Cuban Five and our families, and from the millions of Cubans and brothers and sisters from all over the world who trusted and admired him, we send our most sincere condolences to Len’s family and friends.

Leonard Weinglass, ¡presente!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo
USP Victorville, California
March 23

U.S. steps up drive to conquer Libya Oil profiteers call the shots

Continued from page 1

of Tobruk. The company is being sold to the Qataris. The plan is to place the money in escrow for Italian, French, Spanish and U.S. oil companies like ENI, Repsol, Total and Occidental Petroleum. (New York Times, March 29)

Libya has a \$70 billion state sovereign fund that U.S. private equity firms and hedge funds like the Blackstone Group, Colony Capital, Lightyear Capital and other Wall Street sharks have been trying to get into. With Washington’s freezing of Libya’s assets, these deals have been frozen. But, according to Don Steinbrugge, managing partner of Agecroft Partners, a Virginia consultant to hedge funds and investors, “Once there is a transition to a more stable government, their asset base should be a positive in helping them build business.” (Business Week, March 24)

Wall Street’s ‘rebel’ minister

A key person who can help these corporate predators is the newly appointed finance minister of the National Transition Council, Ali Tarhouni. Tarhouni left Libya in 1973 for the U.S. He taught economics at the University of Washington Graduate School of Business, specializing

in stock analysis. He consults widely and sits on a number of corporate advisory boards. (tibra.org/awards/2002/judges/tarhouni.htm)

Tarhouni was a key participant in a 1994 conference on “post-Gadhafi Libya” hosted by the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies. He promoted privatization and regional economic integration at the conference, which was also attended by various groups with ties to the National Endowment for Democracy — a conduit for the CIA.

Tarhouni was the political coordinator for a National Conference of the Libyan Opposition in Seattle. The NCLO was founded in London in 2005 and is centered on the National Salvation Front, with a history of CIA connections. (“Post-Qaddafi Libya on the Globalist Road,” Foreign Policy Journal, Feb. 26) Tarhouni is Wall Street’s point man in the pro-imperialist would-be government.

Washington’s ‘boots on the ground’

The White House and the Pentagon say there will be no “boots on the ground” and that they are just supporting the “rebels.” In fact, the rebels have become the Pentagon’s de facto “boots on the ground”

for the moment, inadequate though they may be, while U.S. Tomahawk missiles attempt to blast a path for them to Tripoli.

However the rebellion in the oil-rich Benghazi region may have begun, the U.S. government would never decide to spend \$100 million a day and move its naval power into the region to support a genuine national liberation movement. The U.S. ruling class, which has a long and bloody history of intervention, is unlikely to make such a colossal miscalculation.

It is also doubtful that any genuine national liberation movement would call on the biggest imperialist aggressors in history to be its protectors. This rebellion may have fed on genuine popular discontent. But the power of imperialism in the post-Soviet era and its ability to manipulate and capture movements must be the paramount calculation in the minds of any leaders who genuinely want to liberate their countries from oppression.

During the era when the USSR and Eastern Europe existed as a material stronghold of the socialist camp, and at a time when China was pursuing an anti-imperialist policy, liberation movements around the world could acquire military, technical, political, medical and other

types of support for their struggles for national liberation.

At present, only a movement with a firmly grounded, anti-imperialist orientation, which is highly organized and has prepared the groundwork to arm itself without falling prey to Washington or London, can hope to carry out a successful liberation struggle.

Whatever grievances a people may have, nothing is stronger, harsher or more reactionary than the oppression and superexploitation the imperialist powers will impose. Any groupings that open the door to an imperialist takeover of their country only serve these predatory interests.

Stop military adventure

The Libyan operation is a military adventure. The Pentagon generals and admirals, especially the Navy high command, want to use their killer arsenals on Libya. However, the high command is ambivalent about this operation. The most aggressive forces want to go in and kill Col. Gadhafi. In the first days of the attacks, the military launched a bunker-buster missile on the presidential compound. Its aim was to kill or terrorize.

Obama in his speech referred to a limit-

Washington tries to control world’s revolts

By John Catalinotto

The imperialist powers at first appeared surprised and without a coherent response to the mass uprisings in January against their existing client regimes in the mainly Arab states in Western Asia and North Africa. By the end of March the European imperialist powers — with some dissidence — have regrouped under U.S. leadership to increase their intrusion into the region with diplomacy and bombs.

Depending on the situation in the particular country, this intrusion has taken different forms.

In Tunisia and Egypt, where powerful mass movements have deposed long-term imperialist clients, the U.S. has looked to keep the army intact and in control of the state, while supporting those political forces that will cooperate with world imperialism much as the old rulers did, but with new faces.

On the Arabian peninsula, ruled mainly by monarchies tied by political, military and especially economic bonds to the imperialists, the U.S. has supported the old rulers, supplying the bullets these regimes fire against their unarmed opposition.

In countries whose governments have at least some independence from the imperialists, Washington is ready to promote uprisings to bring about “regime change.” In Libya, the U.S. and the other imperialists first waged a propaganda campaign against the existing Moammar Gadhafi government and then used bombs and rockets to support the “rebel” side of a civil war. The policy’s goal is to depose the regime and reconquer Libya as a colony.

Since Washington considers the Syrian regime an obstacle to its domination of the region, the corporate media can be expected to both give extensive coverage to developments there and exaggerate any repression, as it did with Libya.

There is no guarantee the imperialist strategy will succeed. The revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and throughout the region are still developing and may surprise the world once more.

Prayers give way to protests

On March 25, hundreds of thousands protested in these countries after Friday

ed engagement and declared that the goal was not to kill Gadhafi by military force. After this speech, Sen. John McCain, who speaks for a section of the military, opposed this concept of limited war and said that Gadhafi should be killed by military force. He implied that were it not for the British, the French and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the attacks might not have taken place.

In fact, the attack was launched by the U.S. on an emergency basis when the Gadhafi government was on the verge of recapturing Benghazi. Obama had been vacillating between the cautious camp, led by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, and the hawks, led by Clinton. Like McCain, Clinton represents the more adventurous forces in the military.

Just as in Afghanistan, the military forces that were for wider war prevailed in the political struggle in Washington, after periods of vacillation.

Military adventurism is and always has been a fundamental feature of U.S. imperialism. The anti-war movement must resist this aggression and the attempt to recolonize Libya with all its might. But, in the long run, the only way to end these military adventures is the destruction of U.S. imperialism. □

prayers, demanding both rights and better living conditions.

The largest protests took place in **Yemen**. Tens of thousands of people called upon President Ali Abdullah Saleh to resign. For seven weeks people have been camping out in a square in Sana’a, the capital, near the university, but protests also reached other parts of the country. A week earlier security forces fired on demonstrators, killing 52 and injuring more than 600 in this country of more than 23 million people.

Rumors were published by March 28 that Saleh would resign, but then they were reversed. Leaders of some tribes had earlier declared opposition to Saleh, and there were reports that they had seized seven military bases in the province of Shabwa east of Sana’a.

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on ABC television March 27 that Saleh’s eventual fall would pose “a real problem” for the U.S. regarding its conflict with al-Qaeda. Such talk raises the possibility of yet another U.S. direct intervention in the region. There are al-

War in Libya: It’s about oil

By Tony Murphy

As quickly as the imperialists have launched a war against Libya, anti-war demonstrations have sprung up everywhere. Many signs and slogans mention oil: “No blood for oil” or “Not another war for oil.”

Maybe this focus on oil is just leftist dogma. How much oil does Libya contribute to the global market anyway, compared to countries like Saudi Arabia? And hasn’t Libya already opened its oil fields to capitalist exploitation?

Yes, it has. But because Gadhafi’s government insists on having a say in this process, the capitalists are still not satisfied. It’s not about the flow of oil, but the flow of profits.

“[O]fficial estimates say Libya can produce oil for \$1 a barrel,” reported the Wall Street website Energy and Capital in 2008. “At \$110 on the world market, the simple math gives Libya a \$109 profit margin.”

Investors who want to make a “killing” in the energy market read Energy and Capital. On March 22, its article entitled “The Japan buying opportunity” included the statement: “There’s a reason the phrase ‘Buy when there’s blood in the streets’ is common among advanced investors.”

It’s true the “advanced investors” in countries like the U.S., Britain, Canada, Spain, Italy and France — all members of the original “coalition of the willing” that spearheaded the bombing of Libya — are already profiting from Libya’s “Tripoli tea.”

But in the Libyan market not yet a decade old, their governments are in intense competition with each other. None of them can afford to be outmaneuvered in a country that has vast, undeveloped oil resources.

High Tech, Low Pay

More than twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

ready U.S. Special Forces and CIA operatives working alongside the Yemeni military. (AFP, March 27)

In **Jordan** protesters set up a tent city at the site of the Ministry of the Interior in Amman, the capital. They announced open-ended sit-ins to demand more personal and political rights, the resignation of Prime Minister Marouf Al-Bakhit and a new electoral law. Other demands include the dissolution of parliament and the secret service, which works closely with Western intelligence services.

The regime responded with water cannons and thugs, who protesters say were hired by the government, shutting down the camp.

Repression was also at a higher level in **Bahrain**, where the week before Saudi Arabia had sent hundreds of troops across the causeway connecting it to the island country. Protesters are demanding a restructuring of the monarchy, with more political rights ahead. The regime imposed martial law, however, which prohibits all public gatherings.

In **Egypt** there was a new reason to

And for this moment they have banded together in a thieves’ pact to confront their common problem in Libya: the intense struggle that exists between Gadhafi’s government and oil companies over how much profit they get — and whether they will be able to continue getting it at all.

Workers World has already reported, based on recently released WikiLeaks cables, that Gadhafi was recently able to force French oil company Total to share about 20 percent more of its profit from Libyan oil fields with Libya.

Other cables name Italy’s ENI, Petro-Canada and two consortiums led respectively by U.S. Occidental and Spain’s Repsol as losing \$5.4 billion from renegotiated production contracts.

Still other cables show that Libya exercised the right to revoke drilling rights if the oil companies’ home governments engaged in the demonization of Gadhafi, which has since reached epic proportions.

Libya almost nationalized Petro-Canada’s operations in 2009, when Canadian politicians attacked Libya over that country’s welcome home of alleged Lockerbie

WW managing editor, Monica Moorehead, speaks at Egypt victory rally at U.N. in NYC, Feb. 11.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Subscribe to Workers World Weekly Newspaper

Send \$25 for a 1-year subscription

Subscribe online at

www.workers.org/subscribe
or return the coupon
to **Workers World Newspaper**
55 W. 17th St. #5C, NY, NY 10011

Name _____

Address _____ City /State/Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____



LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

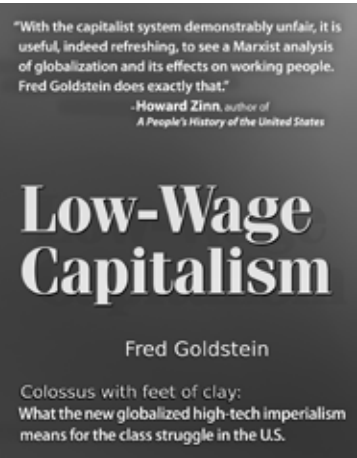
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

An easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

Paperback, 336 pages. Includes graphs, charts, bibliography, endnotes and index.

The author is available for lectures and interviews. **www.LowWageCapitalism.com**

Books available at **Leftbooks.com** & bookstores across the country



Por Fred Goldstein

Al multiplicarse las guerras y los ataques contra los/as trabajadores/as se hacen más severos, una rebelión genuina de la clase trabajadora entrará en la agenda. La clase trabajadora es la única clase que puede acabar con las guerras imperialistas. □